

Uncertain Beginnings

Uncertain beginnings
Hands shaking, hand-shaking
Meet and greet
Sweaty palms and open arms

Temperature drops
Sun sets
Clouds roll in
Lights go on

A scenic town
A tour of the life

What's going down tonight?
How do I start?
Uncertain beginnings

Andrew Wagner, 2009

A Greeting From Ginnie Wade

Welcome, Miss Moore, to Evergreen.
I hope it is not too forward of me to ask,
what brings you here?

I don't mean to pry
into personal matters,
and of course we know your mother,
but your family is not of this town –
St. Louis, then Carlisle, for some years, I understand,
and then New York.

Well, I suppose it is none of my concern --
there are souls from many places in our midst,
and the ones who move through on the other side
are from everywhere.

At least you made it out into that world,
and were not just a bystander
cut down forever at twenty
while kneading your dough –
you formed your loaves and baked them,
tasted them,
and gave them to others to taste.

I heard tell you never married --
neither did I,
though I was engaged to Jack Skelly,
just across the way there,
who passed a few days after me at Winchester,
without ever knowing I was gone.

They tell me you are a poet –
perhaps you can share some verse with us of an evening –
it gets very quiet under these trees at night.

Michael Reed (4/14/18)

A New Day

“I can’t find my basket!” Stasie shouts,
slumping down on the floor next to her sister in a snit,
her lavender Easter dress puffing up over her folded arms.
Renee plucks each piece of chocolate delicately from her basket,
savors each bite, breathing deeply,
groaning at the pleasure.
Narrowing her lids, Stasie’s dark eyes flash with jealousy,
“Renee, you hid my basket so I couldn’t find it!”
Sun filters over her through the open casement windows
allowing a cool breeze to freshen the hot air.

“Why don’t you help her find it?” I call out as I finish dressing for church,
donning the beige straw hat with the long orange scarf.
Glancing in the mirror, I ponder whether my
orange and white ensemble is too bold,
clashing with my honey-red hair.
Flowery perfume permeates the room
from the corsage on the antique vanity -
a gift left by my new husband.
As I pin the orchid to my coat,
I feel happy and lucky to be where I am.
Outside, our car door slams reminding me of the time.

“Hurry up now, “I caution.
Two giggling girls enter my room
throwing themselves on the floor to look under the bed.
Giving Renee a wink, I step backwards against the closet door
as if trying to hide something.
“Where else can we look in here?” she hints
when Stasie catches me in my attempt.
Dashing toward me and pushing me aside,
Stasie playfully sing-songs, “I know where it is!”

Observing her triumphantly dragging the basket
from behind the shoe boxes, I recall her first Easter:
Renee carefully holding her newborn sister in her arms,
both in soft pink, snuggling on my mother’s velvet couch.
An old pain washes over me remembering:
their father was absent, trying to choose
between bachelorhood and family responsibilities.
Opening up a marshmallow bunny,
Stasie looks up with sudden concern.
“Didn’t the Easter Bunny bring you anything?”
“Yes, he did. He brought me you!”

Susan Nelson Vernon
June 5, 2011

A Peaceful Awakening

By Annunciata Marino (December 2017)

Carlisle Poets Workshop

At 4:00 a.m. we slumber with the stars.
I roll over and sense your agility.
You respond with a glance then a blink at the moon,
and we bask in the Sea of Tranquility.

Inside this room we rarely bemoan
any distance could keep us apart.
And when I'm alone I know you won't roam
too far from your place in my heart.

We greet time and space with a smile on our face,
content in each other's presence.
My soul fills with delight that you are in sight
and glows anew with you as the essence.

You may think of me as ignoring your needs
but are we not the same in this regard?
Without saying a word we agree unperturbed
that together we exist in the world of Beauvoir.

Since no other bed is as safe as our own
where trust in our silence prevails,
we return to our dreams of the night of day
in the comfort of a peaceful awakening.

Don't Go In the Cellar

Don't go in the cellar.
It's spooky and really quite dark.
You never know what's lurking,
King Kong, or even a shark!

The steps are steep and narrow.
What creatures hide below?
There could be a monster.
I'm not sure I want to go!

But that is where the ball gloves are,
And my trusty bat.
Although there could be spiders,
Perhaps a giant rat!

So I'll wait up here one moment,
After the lights are on,
To give the ghosts and goblins
The chance to be long gone.

For there's a dungeon down there,
Way back in the rear.
I've seen the shadows sneaking in
Whenever I am near.

How will I be able
To perform this dangerous chore?
There's an ogre underneath the stairs
Of that, I'm pretty sure!

But I summoned up my courage,
Prepared for underground,
When a rustling made my hair stand up.
Was that a zombie sound?

I don't think that I can do this,
But I really want to play.
Will baseball have to wait until
Another sunny day?

But then good fortune smiled on me
As I stood there feeling sad.
Are you ready for some catch, my son?
I'll brave the basement with my Dad!

Gaea and Oceanid

Deep soaking rain storms
carried on westerly winds
nourish my garden.
Magnetic moon plays its part,
tides falling against the shore.

Forces as partners
revolving in unison
quench a thirsting soil.
Drawn into the cycle, I
tilt my water can to earth.

Susan Nelson Vernon
July 31, 2010

Get Out In Your Garden

Spring is here, the Earth's a-waiting
To bring forth life through cultivating
Seeds are ready, it's time to sow
And transplant things like Kalanchoe
The birds do chirp, a rising chant
They call for herbs and spider plant
No special skills, no years of practice
To fill a pot with Christmas Cactus
Crop seedlings now, in Fall will fill us
Long past the bloom of Amaryllis
Asparagus spears push through the ground
The flowery scent of perfume abounds
Plantings of corn, potatoes and peas
Pumpkins and leeks, does Mother Earth please
So with flowers for beauty, and veggies for food
Get out in your garden, it does the soul good

Pom Benson

5 – 19 - 18

Letter to Ana

By Annunciata Marino (August 2018)

Carlisle Poets Workshop

Dear daughter of womankind

Be yourself at all times.

Think once then twice if your choice is truly another's

Do not place your fate in his hands nor your mother's.

Decisions will need to be made each day you walk the earth,

So consider all that you can, and above all, value your worth.

The days you are free will pass quickly, though you will always know

Who you are, as the reasons for your choices will clearly show.

In the hours and days in between, follow your heart,

And truth will bring us together, never apart.

Olde Graveyarde

I know when you were born.
And the date you passed from this earthly,
and into, this earthy realm.
I walk upon your bones!

Not much else is revealed.
Your name. Your spouse.
Maybe your children.
But were you a good man?
Or despised?
I walk upon your bones!

For the wealthy, or perhaps beloved
an occupation, an honor
or listing of service is announced.
A proclamation to all eternity
that this was an important person.
But did you treat your wife kindly?
Or did you whip your children?
Did you greet strangers with a smile?
Or build your fortune on the sweat and blood of others?
I walk upon your bones!
But I know so little.

Did a grin come easily to your face?
Did friends stop by for comradery and good cheer?
Or were you a dour, bitter, spiteful person?
A loquacious chatterbox?
Or did words, and feelings,
and expression come at great effort?
Were you a giant bear of a man?
Or a dapper little chap?
You trod the streets of this town
a hundred years before me.
Now I walk upon your bones
And will never know you.

Pom Benson
February 2019

Tribute to Teddy G

The children were grumbling for something to eat
But Poppa, poor Poppa
Just got home, and was beat
Oh, but we're starving, the little ones cried
Give us some cookies, marshmallows, or pie

Hold on one moment, Dad called in a truce
And threw out a line from the good Dr. Seuss

"Snack, snack, eat a snack
Eat a snack with Brown and Black"*
The kids think their old man's a quack
Who the heck are Brown and Black?

Pop came in to feed the crowd
For they were getting rather LOUD
"He looked in the kitchen
He said, By Cracky!
Five things here are very Wacky!"*

Feeding just his three kids,
now that would not do
He added Sean and Eileen
"called Thing One and Thing Two"*
Who stopped by the house almost every day
And if there was pizza,
They ALWAYS would stay!

Fruits and veggies, how about that?
Surely those snacks won't make you fat.
And if you please, I'll dance like the Cat
"With a cup and a cake on the top of my hat!"*

"I dreamed a dozen doughnuts"* the smallest lamented
For her dear old Poppa was surely demented
As he offered an option high in Vitamin B
A can from the pantry labeled...
Chicken of the Sea

"One fish, two fish, red fish, blue fish"*
Did you ever smell a dead fish?
Eeeewwww fish!

Alarmed that the children might start to cry
He offered up jambon and fried eggs with dye

"I do not like green eggs and ham"*
Even less do I like spam
Don't get me started on the yam
I much prefer some bread and jam!

So Dad was looking like a jerk
When an idea flashed –
Would pizza work?
The kids smiled sweetly
If you please....
We'll even help you grate the cheese

A crust was made from flour and yeast
For topping, Poppa “carved the roast beast”*
They loaded it up with red ripe tomato
Broccoli, beets, and thin-sliced potato
Pickles and cabbage, I can't tell a lie
When it was all done...
It stood Three Feet High!
With mozzarella, provolone, a little parmesan
Baked in the oven until it was done

The kids lapped it up, for pizza's a treat
And Dad got them their veggies,
Which was no little feat.
“And that is a story that no one can beat
And to think that it happened on Mulberry Street!”*

*Either straight-out stolen from, or slightly paraphrased from, the writings of the inimitable
Theodor Geisel!

Pom Benson
February 2019